

# Third-Party Education of Girls in *Kinder-und-Hausmärchen*

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In 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany, the roles of bourgeois women changed, and hence, their education had to change, too. This research analyzes Grimm fairy tales that exemplify the concept of third-party education of female characters as a means to create an ideal bourgeois woman. It explores a concept that was not only promoted in the Grimm fairy tales, but that was also experienced in the Grimm family.

“Frau Holle,” “Snow White,” and “Mary’s Child” from *Kinder- und- Hausmärchen* demonstrate the use of an outside party to educate a woman in the art of domesticity and social responsibility. These fairy tales all present a reward and punishment education; the women who are obedient and productive are rewarded, while those who are obstinate and lazy are punished. This system illustrates the values of 19<sup>th</sup> century German bourgeois society.

## Female Education

- Three roles according to Joachim Heinrich Campe:
  - Aristocratic Housewife
  - Wife
  - Mother
- The roles of wife and mother were important to the German bourgeoisie.
- Educated women gained authority over the management of property, servants, and family relationships. They were responsible for the education of the children.
- A girl needed proper education to be fully prepared for the responsibilities she would face as an adult. The better the mother’s education, the better the education and care of her children would be.

## Women in the Grimm Brothers’ Lives

- Dorothea Grimm: Grimm brothers’ mother, first read them Hessian tales, supervised the maids, looked after the house and garden, baked, made preserves, and took care of her children. She petitioned Count Wilhelm I, Elector of Hesse, so the Grimm brothers could receive the best education.
- Juliane Schlemmer: Aunt, taught them bible stories and the ability to read and write, lived with the family.
- Henriette Zimmer: Aunt, sent comfort, advice, and money after the Grimm brothers’ father and Schlemmer had died. The Grimm brothers lived with her while attending *Lyceum Fridericianum* in Kassel.
- Lotte Grimm: Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm’s sister, helped with household chores after their mother’s death.
- Dorothea Wild: Informant, model for fairy tale characters, intimate friend of Lotte, took care of her deceased sister’s children and eventually married Wilhelm.

## The Plot

An abusive stepmother sends her stepdaughter to a well to perform an impossible task. The girl falls down the well into another realm, the world of Frau Holle. Here she has to fulfill tasks that become a means to test her. On her way to Frau Holle’s house, she encounters bread that wants to be removed from the oven and apples that request her to shake the tree to help the ripe apples fall to the ground. When she arrives at Frau Holle’s house, Frau Holle enlists her help with domestic tasks. The step-daughter performs these tasks without question and is sent home with gold, becoming Goldmarie.

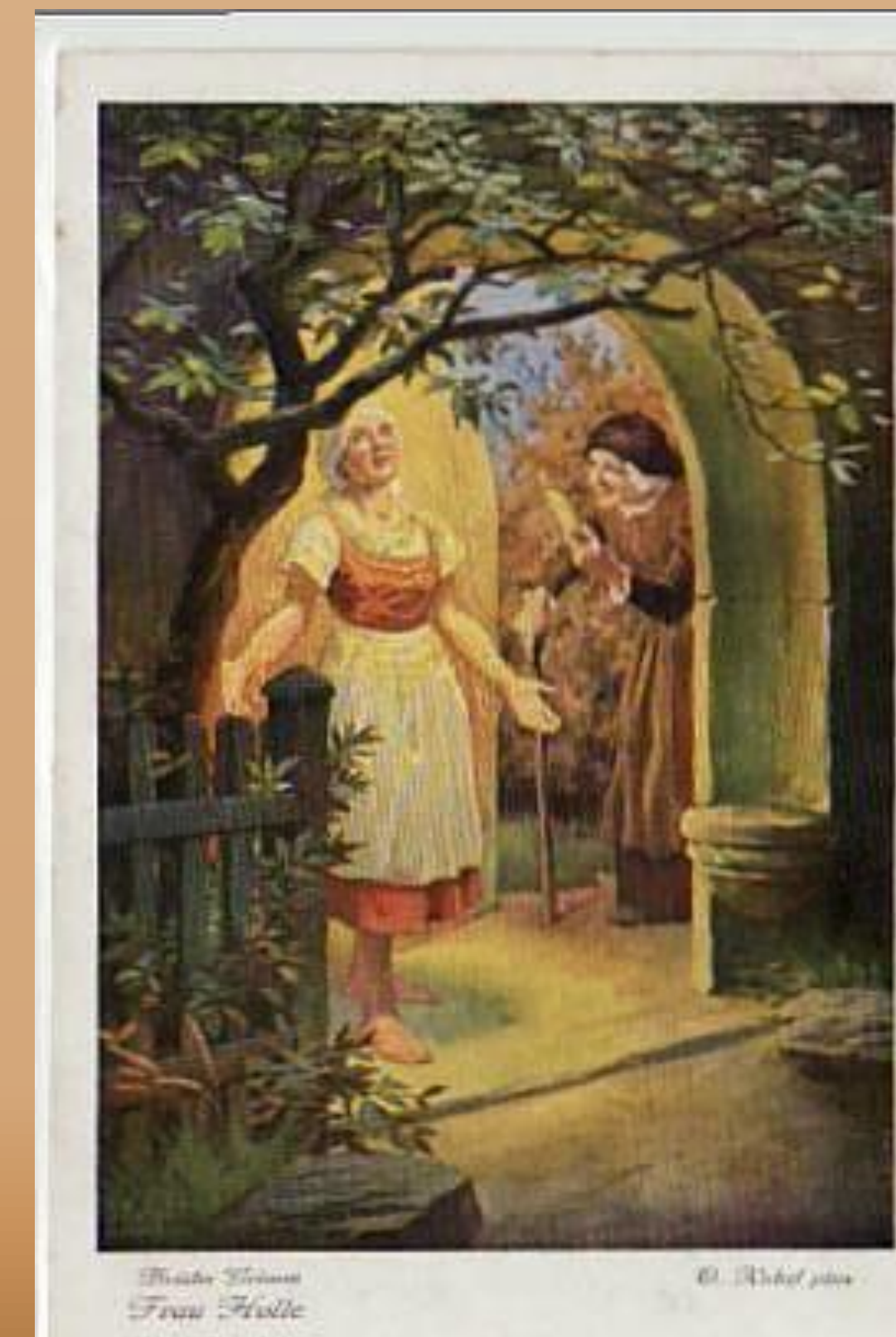
The cruel stepmother wants her biological daughter to excel, so she sends her down the well, too. The biological daughter lets the bread burn, and refuses to help the apples. The girl fails because of her laziness and, as a punishment, is permanently covered in pitch, becoming Pechmarie.

## Frau Holle

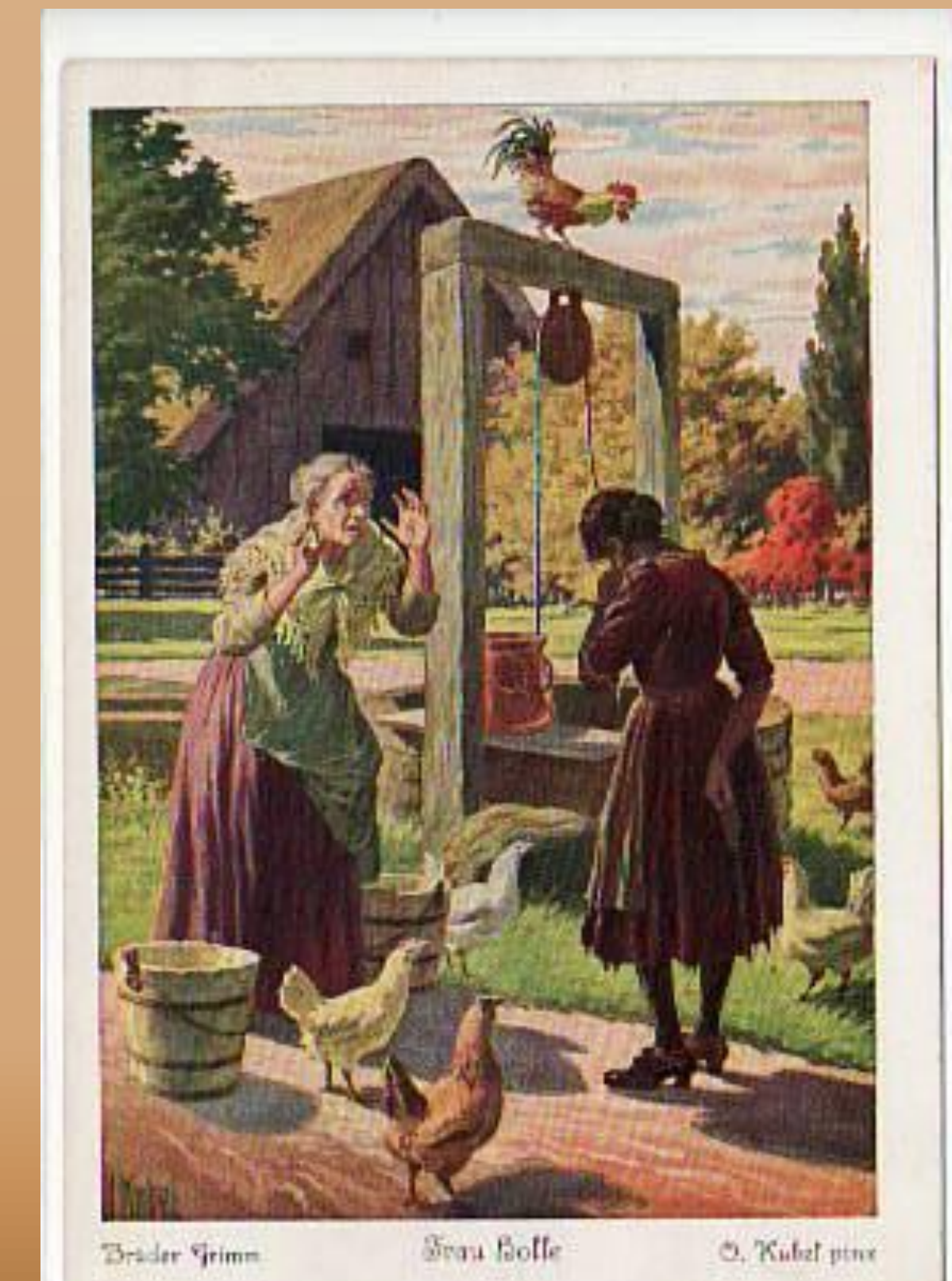
- Requests the girls to fluff the pillows, and cook
- Provides an equal environment
- Tasks serve to test domesticity, capability, integrity, reliability, and responsibility of the girls
- Fills in as a maternal figure due to the stepmother’s failure
- Successful in rewarding and punishing

## The (Step)mother

- Favors the biological daughter Pechmarie over stepdaughter Goldmarie
- Cruel to stepdaughter
- Parenting is ineffective for both daughters
- Punished through the punishment of Pechmarie



<http://www.antik-falkensee.de/catalog/images/2011/m62207.JPG>



<http://www.antik-falkensee.de/catalog/images/2010/m62166.JPG>

## Goldmarie

- “Pretty and diligent”
- “Cinderella of the house”
- Responds to nature by taking the bread out and shaking the tree
  - Women were perceived to be closer to nature than men, and were supposed to have the ability to respond to it [Biological determination]
- Stays with Frau Holle for a year
- Is homesick despite bad home environment
- Requests permission to go home
- Rewarded with gold

## Pechmarie

- “Ugly and lazy”
- Spoiled by mother
- Denies her “biological determination”
- Stays with Frau Holle for only three days
  - First day: performs tasks, motivated by greed
  - Second day: performs tasks, but not well
  - Third day: does not even get out of bed
- Service is terminated
- Punished with pitch (tar)

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